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President: Ms. King (Vice-President) ..... (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)

Contents

Agenda item 17: Non-governmental organizations (*continued*)

Agenda item 15: Regional cooperation

Agenda item 11: Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (*continued*)

(b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 (*continued*)

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(a) Sustainable development (*continued*)

(b) Science and technology for development

(h) International cooperation in tax matters (*continued*)

(i) Geospatial information (*continued*)

Agenda item 12: Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(a) Reports of coordination bodies (*continued*)

(g) Calendar of conferences and meetings in the economic, social and related fields

Agenda item 4: Elections, nominations, confirmations and appointments (*continued*)

Conclusion of the 2018 session of the Council

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In the absence of Ms. Chatardova (Czechia), Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 17: Non-governmental organizations (*continued*) (E/2018/32 (Part II) and E/2018/L.29)

1. **Mr. Grout-Smith** (United Kingdom) said that civil society organizations had an important role to play in all aspects of work of the United Nations, and their participation should be encouraged. Accordingly, the United Kingdom was concerned about reprisals against organizations and individuals for attending United Nations activities, and it attached particular importance to the work of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations. It also took very seriously the Council's role of considering and deciding on the Committee's recommendations.

2. During its resumed session, the Committee had not had time to reconsider the applications of organizations that had responded to questions during the initial session or even to finish its review of the quadrennial reports. In view of its increased work load, it was essential for the Committee to improve its work methods for the review of the quadrennial reports, which was drawing valuable time away from the consideration of applications for consultative status.

3. Once again, there had been blatant and repeated discrimination against requesting organizations with a human rights focus. Accredited non-governmental organizations should reflect the full spectrum of issues considered by the United Nations, including the fundamental pillar of human rights.

4. Welcoming the inaugural consultations between the Committee and civil society, he noted the high level of attendance, the range of good suggestions and the clear desire of the civil society participants to be more involved. The United Kingdom looked forward to future dialogues before each session of the Committee and hoped that the recommendations generated would be integrated into the work of the Committee and the Organization as a whole. Given the recent successful use of video teleconferencing, it should also be employed during the Committee's question-and-answer sessions to enable the participation of non-governmental organizations that could not afford to send representatives to New York.

Draft decision E/2018/L.29: Application of the non-governmental organization Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

5. **The President** said that the draft decision had no programme budget implications.

6. **Mr. Licharz** (Germany), introducing the draft decision, said that throughout its more than 60-year history, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung had demonstrated its full commitment to the Charter of the United Nations. The foundation was well established and well regarded throughout the world. It was already working with the United Nations on civic education and sustainable development and had established a New York office expressly to facilitate cooperation. Having consultative status would allow it to contribute even more effectively to the work of the Organization. He reminded delegations that the purpose of the Council was to promote the well-being of all and urged those opposed to accrediting the foundation to set aside narrow, self-serving interests.

7. **Ms. Herity** (Secretary of the Council) said that Canada, Cyprus, Estonia, Georgia, Japan, Liechtenstein, Norway and the Republic of Moldova wished to become sponsors.

8. **Mr. Shulgin** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation was especially disheartened by the increasing trend to push through consultative status for organizations. The value of civil society organizations lay in their independence from States and their ability to make objective and impartial contributions.

9. The application of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung had been under consideration for an unusually brief time, and the foundation's representatives had not had the opportunity to respond in depth to the questions from the experts. Furthermore, non-members of the Committee, who represented the majority of the Council, did not have sufficient information to assess its conclusions. During the resumed session, the Russian Federation had advocated extending the open dialogue to avoid making a hasty decision. Under paragraph 8 of Council resolution 1996/31, States had the right to receive information of interest to them from organizations requesting consultative status, which allowed the Committee to make an informed decision and to treat all applicants on an equal footing.

10. In view of the Committee's recommendations, the short period of consideration and the lack of information, his delegation moved to adjourn the debate in accordance with rule 50 of the Council's rules of procedure.

11. **The President** said that since the representative of the Russian Federation had moved that no action should be taken on draft decision E/2018/L.29, she would, in accordance with rule 50 of the rules of procedure, give the floor to a maximum of two representatives favouring the motion to adjourn and two opposing it, after which the motion would immediately be put to a vote.

12. **Mr. Guang** Cha (China) said that it was a matter of concern that some countries had been pushing to overrule the Committee's decisions. The Committee had the right to question and receive answers from organizations requesting consultative status. The Council should respect the Committee's mandate and uphold its decisions. On that basis, his delegation seconded the no-action motion.

13. **Mr. Licharz** (Germany) said that the participation of civil society organizations was crucial to the work of the United Nations. If Member States could not discuss the issues of accreditation in the Council, where could they? Throughout the accreditation process, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung had diligently answered all questions, and no substantial evidence had emerged to indicate that it did not meet all the requirements of Council resolution 1996/31. The Russian motion clearly showed that the delegations opposing its accreditation had run out of arguments. After lengthy consultations, the time had come to take a decision. He urged all members of the Council to reject the motion.

14. **Mr. Poveda Brito** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), noting the valuable role of non-governmental organizations in the United Nations system, said that his delegation remained concerned at the Council's selective disregard for recommendations of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations. The recommendations in the Committee report should be accepted as a whole in order not to undermine its mandate. Furthermore, a number of Committee members had expressed a need for a longer period of time to consider the application, in keeping with the usual practic His delegation would therefore vote in favour of the no-action motion.

15. **Ms. Eckels-Currie** (United States of America) said that Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung was a well-known and highly regarded foundation that would contribute significantly to the Council's work and met the criteria for consultative status set out in Council resolution 1996/31. As a matter of principle, the United States generally opposed no-action motions, which were misused to prevent action on important issues. The draft decision to grant consultative status to Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung had been submitted in compliance with the Committee's rules of procedure, and Member States had had more than enough time to consider it. Her delegation would vote against the motion, and it called on others to do the same.

16. *A recorded vote was taken on the motion by the Russian Federation to take no action on draft decision E/2018/L.29.*

In favour:

Belarus, China, Guyana, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Sudan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam.

Against:

Andorra, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Czechia, Denmark, El Salvador, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Korea (Republic of), Japan, Mexico, Moldova (Republic of), Norway, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Rwanda, Spain, Togo, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay.

Abstaining:

Algeria, Benin, Ecuador, Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey, United Arab Emirates.

17. *The no-action motion was rejected by 27 votes to 10, with 7 abstentions.*

18. **The President** said that a recorded vote had been requested on draft decision E/2018/L.29.

Statements made in explanation of vote before the voting

19. **Mr. Muchka** (Czechia), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union supported the draft decision. Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung was a political foundation with more than 90 offices and 200 projects worldwide. In 2017, it had opened an office in New York exclusively to contribute to the work of the United Nations and to engage its partners around the world in discussions with the United Nations.

20. Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung had submitted its application for consultative status in May 2016. Since then the Director of the New York office had met frequently with the Committee to answer questions, and the foundation had also submitted written responses. Nevertheless, the Committee had once again voted not to recommend it for consultative status.

21. All applications for consultative status should be considered in a transparent manner and without undue delay. Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung met all the criteria for accreditation set out in Council resolution 1996/31. The States members of the European Union would vote in

favour of the draft decision, and they urged other States to do the same.

22. **Ms. Rodríguez** (Observer for Cuba) said that the Mexican office of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung had publicly declared its intent to undermine her country's constitutional order, in flagrant violation of the spirit, purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The Director of that office maintained relations with individuals, including a confessed terrorist, who were paid by a foreign Government to promote political instability in Cuba. Furthermore, the organization had violated proper procedure by not responding to the Committee's questions. In view of the Committee's well-founded decision not to recommend Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung for consultative status, she urged Council members to vote against the draft decision.

23. **Ms. Eckels-Currie** (United States of America) said that it was regrettable that granting consultative status to such a clearly qualified organization should be so difficult. Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung was a well-known and highly regarded foundation with the stated aim of contributing to the work of the United Nations in a number of important areas, including implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, peacekeeping and migration.

24. The Committee's membership was stacked with countries whose hostility to civil society was well documented. Session after session, non-governmental organizations working in the field of human rights faced delaying tactics and endless redundant questions from members that simply did not like them and opposed them for political reasons, regardless of their qualifications. Her delegation urged the Council to support the participation of qualified organizations by voting to grant Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung consultative status.

25. **Mr. Ríos Sánchez** (Mexico), speaking on a point of order, said that he would like to know which delegation had requested a recorded vote.

26. **The President** said that the delegations of China and the Russian Federation had requested the recorded vote.

27. *A recorded vote was taken on draft decision E/2018/L.29.*

In favour:

Andorra, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Czechia, Denmark, France, Germany, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Korea (Republic of), Japan, Lebanon, Mexico, Moldova (Republic of), Nigeria, Norway, Peru, Romania, Rwanda, Spain, Togo, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay.

Against:

China, Philippines, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Sudan, Venezuela, Viet Nam.

Abstaining:

Algeria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Benin, Cameroon, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, India, Tajikistan, United Arab Emirates.

28. *Draft decision E/2018/L.29 was adopted by 28 votes to 8, with 11 abstentions.*

29. **Ms. Nguyen** Lien Huong (Viet Nam), reiterating her country's support for the contribution of non-governmental organizations to the work of the United Nations, said that the Council needed to respect, preserve and promote the important role of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, which had a responsibility to ask any questions needed to clarify the aims, purposes and activities of organizations seeking consultative status. Her delegation had followed the consideration of the application from the outset. Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung had been operating in Viet Nam since 1992, and it enjoyed a warm relationship with the Government. Viet Nam had therefore very much hoped that it would respond to the questions in due course. However, because the legitimate concerns of Committee members remained unaddressed, her delegation had voted with regret against granting it consultative status.

30. **Ms. Bakuramutsa** (Rwanda) said that, having listened to the concerns of Cuba, her delegation had nevertheless voted to grant Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung consultative status on the basis of its work in her country. Civil society could play an important role in helping Member States to implement the 2030 Agenda, particularly at the local level. However, non-governmental organizations granted consultative status with the Council should focus solely on social and economic development, in accordance with the Council's mandate, and should remain apolitical and non-partisan.

Action on the recommendations contained in the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its 2018 resumed session (E/2018/32 (Part II))

31. **The President** invited the Council to take action on the draft decisions contained in chapter I of the report.

Draft decision I: Applications for consultative status, requests for reclassification and requests for a change of name received from non-governmental organizations

32. *Draft decision I, as amended by the adoption of draft decision E/2018/L.29, was adopted.*

Draft decision II: Request for acknowledgement of merger

Draft decision III: Requests for withdrawal of consultative status received from three non-governmental organizations

Draft decision IV: Suspension of the consultative status of non-governmental organizations with outstanding quadrennial reports, pursuant to Council resolution 2008/4

Draft decision V: Reinstatement of the consultative status of non-governmental organizations that submitted outstanding quadrennial reports, pursuant to Council resolution 2008/4

Draft decision VI: Withdrawal of the consultative status of non-governmental organizations, pursuant to Council resolution 2008/4

Draft decision VII: Dates and provisional agenda of the 2019 session of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations

Draft decision VIII: Report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its 2018 resumed session

33. *Draft decisions II, III, IV, V, VI, VII and VIII were adopted.*

Agenda item 15: Regional cooperation (E/2018/15, E/2018/15/Add.1, E/2018/17, E/2018/18, E/2018/19 and E/2018/20)

34. **Mr. Nour** (Director of the Regional Commissions New York Office), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields (E/2018/15 and E/2018/15/Add.1), said that the first part of the report highlighted the central role of the regional commissions in facilitating national implementation of the 2030 Agenda. As think tanks, they provided policy advocacy, research and analysis, encapsulated in multiple reports on 2030 Agenda issues. As conveners, they held sessions that offered a platform for multisectoral regional cooperation on the Sustainable Development Goals, held high-level conferences and organized the regional forums on sustainable development, which were the culmination of numerous, intense regional processes initiated by the commissions. In their operational function, they provided technical support, advisory services and capacity-building in areas such as transboundary issues, regional norms and standards, macroeconomics, financing for development, statistics and South-South cooperation.

35. The second part of the report covered regional and interregional cooperation. At their sessions that year, the regional commissions had focused on themes of particular importance for their regions. The Regional Coordination Mechanisms were now meeting jointly or back to back with the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group, and interregional cooperation had increased substantially in areas such as energy, trade and road safety. The regional commissions would continue to participate in the efforts to reposition the United Nations development system.

36. **Mr. Escalante Hasbún** (El Salvador) said that the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean played a key role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, not only as a think tank but also as the organizer of the regional forum for sustainable development, whose work was essential to that of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. He wished to know if there had been any progress on the proposals for revamping the regional approach. He would also appreciate the Director's comments on the time allocated during the high-level forum for presentations by the Ministerial Chairs of the regional forums, which had been too short to allow dialogue.

37. **Mr. Nour** (Director of the Regional Commissions New York Office) said that revamping the regional approach was about more than the regional commissions; it was about the agencies, funds and programmes and how they interacted. A number of internal teams were working with stakeholders within the United Nations system on how to optimize the regional architecture to improve support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, but progress had not been sufficient to report back to Member States.

38. As for the time allotted to the regional forums during the high-level political forum, he agreed that it was insufficient. Member States might wish to revise the forum schedule.

39. **Mr. Aguirre Vacchieri** (Chile) said that he was aware of an internal study on overlaps among the mandates of the regional commissions and the various agencies, funds and programmes. The Council might like to see it as soon as possible. He had heard of proposals to cut regional commission staffing, which would be a matter of great concern.

Action on the recommendations contained in the addendum to the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields (E/2018/15/Add.1)

40. **The President** invited the Council to take action on the draft resolutions contained in chapter I, sections A, B and C, of the report.

Section A

Draft resolution: Admission of French Guiana as an associate member of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Section B

Draft resolution I: African Institute for Economic Development and Planning

Draft resolution II: New strategic directions of the Economic Commission for Africa

Draft resolution III: Venue of the fifty-second session of the Economic Commission for Africa

Section C

Draft resolution: Transition of the Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture to an intergovernmental organization outside the United Nations system

41. *The draft resolutions were adopted.*

42. **The President** said that she took it that the Council wished to take note of the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields (E/2018/15 and E/2018/15/Add.1) and the notes by the Secretary-General regarding the economic situation in the Economic Commission for Europe region (Europe, North America and the Commonwealth of Independent States), 2017–2018 (E/2018/16), the overview of economic and social conditions in Africa, 2018 (E/2018/17), the summary of the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2018 (E/2018/18), the economic situation and outlook for Latin America and the Caribbean for the period 2017–2018 (E/2018/19) and the economic and social developments in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia region for the period 2017–2018 (E/2018/20).

43. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 11: Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (*continued*)

(b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 (*continued*) (E/2018/L.13 and E/2018/L.26)

Draft resolution E/2018/L.26: Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020

44. **The President** invited the Committee to take action on the draft resolution, which she had submitted on the basis of informal consultations on draft resolution E/2018/L.13. The draft resolution contained no programme budget implications.

45. *Draft resolution E/2018/L.26 was adopted.*

46. *Draft resolution E/2018/L.13 was withdrawn.*

47. **Ms. Kieran** (United States of America) said that although her delegation had joined the consensus on the draft resolution, she wished to clarify its position on the language relating to the 2030 Agenda. The Agenda was non-binding and did not create or affect rights or obligations under international law, nor did it give rise to financial commitments. It did, however, provide a global framework that could help countries work towards global peace and prosperity. The United States applauded its call for shared responsibility, including national responsibility, and the recognition that each country should implement the Agenda in accordance with its own national policies and priorities.

48. According to paragraph 18 of General Assembly resolution 70/1, implementation of the 2030 Agenda should be consistent with the rights and obligations of States under international law, and according to paragraph 58, it should not prejudice the independent mandates of other processes, including negotiations, or serve as a precedent for decisions and actions in other forums. In other words, the Agenda did not represent a commitment to provide new market access for goods or services, nor did it interpret or alter any agreement or decision of the World Trade Organization (WTO), including the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights.

49. Much of the trade-related language in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 had been overtaken by events and was irrelevant to ongoing work and negotiations

involving trade. Moreover, the United States disassociated itself from any reference to financial assistance related to the Technology Bank for the Least Development Countries or technology transfer that was not clearly both voluntary and mutually agreed. Any such paragraphs undermined intellectual property rights and would have no bearing on future United States negotiations.

50. In regard to paragraph 7 of the draft resolution, the United States was the single largest provider of official development assistance (ODA). It recognized that ODA was critical, particularly for low-income, fragile and conflict-affected countries, and it was committed to sustainable development for all. However, it had never agreed to the arbitrary ODA target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI), which bore no relationship to demonstrated need or the ability of recipients to use aid effectively.

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions (*continued*) (E/2018/L.22)

(a) Sustainable development (*continued*)

Draft resolution E/2018/L.22: Report of the Committee for Development Policy on its twentieth session

51. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

52. *Draft resolution E/2018/L.22 was adopted.*

53. **Mr. Sannabe** (Japan) said that, during the consultation process, his delegation had carefully reviewed the language of the draft resolution to ensure the consistency and integrity of the category of least developed countries, while taking into consideration specific challenges such as economic vulnerability and the impact of climate change. Japan appreciated the willingness of Bhutan to graduate from the category of least developed countries and had supported postponing its graduation for two years to enable it to align its transition strategy with its twelfth national development plan. Japan would provide support to ensure a smooth graduation and transition in accordance with that plan. It would also work closely with the countries recommended for graduation in the next review to ensure their smooth graduation, transition and further sustainable development.

54. **Mr. Kimmel** (United States of America) said that while many least developed countries, including small island developing States, had understandable concerns about graduating, his delegation was concerned that requests for extensions were becoming common and that the Council was increasingly granting extensions beyond the standard three years. The large number of extensions reduced the Council's credibility and discouraged meaningful development policy.

55. Additionally, certain elements of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway might no longer be implementable. In particular, the trade-related language in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 had been overtaken by events and was irrelevant to ongoing work and negotiations involving trade.

56. **Mr. Sisilo** (Observer for Solomon Islands), speaking on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum, said that the Forum countries appreciated the understanding shown by various delegations for the challenges specific to Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu as Pacific island least developed countries. Graduation was often likened to a cliff, and hard work was needed to ensure that graduating countries did not simply fall off it. Successful graduation took preparation and time, because graduating countries needed to institute a large number of new policies and sometimes legislative changes to remain globally competitive and maintain their development trajectory.

57. The metrics used to judge readiness for graduation were fragile. In the case of the Pacific island countries, the use of GNI per capita to judge economic growth had consistently masked development realities in an environment where ODA contributed a significant proportion of GNI and purchasing power was limited.

58. The Forum countries were pleased that the draft resolution avoided driving some countries off the cliff. However, they strongly believed that the criteria for graduation and the reporting process needed to be reconsidered. The countries identified for graduation had indicated that the metrics did not reflect their development reality, and no country to graduate had ever met the economic vulnerability index criteria. While it was important to ensure the integrity and credibility of the graduation criteria, applying them in a way that underestimated the remaining fundamental challenges would lead to the graduation of ill-prepared countries. They hoped that the 2021 review would focus on ensuring that all countries considered for graduation had a full understanding of the process and adequate opportunity for meaningful input.

59. With respect to Solomon Islands, which was a post-conflict country and did not meet the vulnerability index criteria, his delegation would consult with members of the Council and others on the best way to precede with graduation.

60. **Ms. Tshering** (Observer for Bhutan) said that her delegation was grateful for the Council's endorsement of the recommendation to graduate Bhutan from the category of least developed countries and for its agreement to align the effective graduation date with the conclusion of the twelfth five-year national development plan. Although Bhutan faced daunting challenges as a small landlocked country, it was committed to graduating in an irreversible manner.

(b) Science and technology for development
(A/73/66-E/2018/10 and E/2018/31)

61. **Mr. Gómez Ramírez** (Dominican Republic), Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, introducing the report of the Commission on Science and Technology on its twenty-first session (E/2018/31), said that the Commission had discussed the role of science and technology in the context of the 2030 Agenda and had reviewed progress on implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society. In addition, it had considered two priority themes, held two ministerial round tables and analysed science, technology and innovation policies.

62. During its assessment of progress on implementing the outcomes of the World Summit, the Commission had reaffirmed the World Summit vision of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society and its understanding that the success of the 2030 Agenda would depend on increasing access to information and communications technology. In addition, it had welcomed the good progress made by the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation, including the emergence of consensus on some issues, while expressing regret that it had not been able to issue recommendations for enhanced cooperation as envisioned in the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society.

63. During the its consideration of the first priority theme, "The role of science, technology and innovation in increasing substantially the share of renewable energy by 2030", the Commission had decided to urge Governments to increase support for research and development activities in renewable energy technologies and improve policy coordination and policy coherence. With regard to the second theme, "Building digital competencies to benefit from existing and emerging technologies, with a special focus on gender and youth dimensions", it had noted the need to help countries identify future capacity-building needs so that they could build the digital skills and competencies required to take advantage of the jobs and development opportunities created by new technologies.

64. The Commission had held two ministerial round tables, the first on the Council's 2018 theme, "From global to local: supporting sustainable and resilient societies in urban and rural communities", and the second on the impact of rapid technological change on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. During the first round table, Member States had shared experiences in using science, technology and innovation to provide clean water and sanitation, affordable, clean energy and quality education.

65. During its consideration of science, technology and innovation policies, the Commission had discussed the ongoing work on integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into the framework for national science, technology and innovation policy reviews, with a specific focus on bottom-of-the-pyramid approaches to innovation, and had held a panel discussion on the theme "New science, technology and innovation policy framework and approaches to finance innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals".

66. The Commission had adopted two draft resolutions, entitled "Science, technology and innovation for development" and "Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society".

67. Lastly, the Commission had selected "The impact of rapid technological change on sustainable development" and "The role of science, technology and innovation in building resilient communities, including through the contribution of citizen science" as the priority themes of its twenty-second session.

68. **Ms. Wu** (Chief of the Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Section, Division on Technology and Logistics, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels (A/73/66-E/2018/10), said that that global use of mobile and broadband technologies continued to grow. However, in 2017, less than 20 per cent of the people in least developed countries had had access to the Internet, compared to more than 80 per cent in the developed world. The digital divide had also persisted within countries as well as between city and country, rich and poor, educated and less educated, young and old, and men and women. The proportion of women using the Internet was 12 per cent lower than the proportion of men in general, and, in the least developed countries, it was more than 30 per cent and growing. Policymakers needed to address the underlying factors, including

inadequate infrastructure, affordability of devices and services, and lack of awareness and relevant skills.

69. Developing countries, particularly least developed countries, were poorly prepared to take advantage of the many opportunities provided by the expanding digital economy. All countries should invest in digital infrastructure, digital skills and legal and regulatory frameworks that facilitated business innovation. It was particularly important to take steps to ensure that skills acquisition kept pace with changes in technology and markets. Countries and companies that invested in infrastructure and competencies were likely to benefit from new technologies, while those that lacked the necessary resources would not. In that light, policymakers should consider ways of addressing the impact of structural inequalities on inclusiveness and sustainability, including by giving additional support to developing countries.

70. Reliable measurement of the evolving digital economy was essential for the design and implementation of evidence-based policy. Big data analysis could prove useful, but it raised issues of privacy, data protection and cybersecurity that required further exploration. Furthermore, the ability of Governments to act on better data was limited by human capacity and financial resources. In that connection, the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy had recently recommended the establishment of a working group on measuring e-commerce and the digital economy.

71. Increased reliance on the Internet and connected information technology systems had heightened vulnerability to cyberattacks. That would be exacerbated by the anticipated rapid expansion of the Internet of Things, especially in the absence of internationally agreed standards for connected devices. International attention had been focused on improving cybersecurity awareness and making products and services more secure, as well as on the need for multi-stakeholder cooperation to anticipate threats and respond to them rapidly.

Action on the recommendations contained in the report of the Commission on Science and Technology on its twenty-first session (E/2018/31)

72. **The President** invited the Council to take action on the draft resolutions contained in chapter I, section A, of the report.

Draft resolution I: Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society

Draft resolution II: Science, technology and innovation for development

73. *The draft resolutions were adopted.*

74. **The President** invited the Council to take action on the draft decision contained in chapter I, section B, of the report.

Draft decision: Report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on its twenty-first session and provisional agenda and documentation for the twenty-second session of the Commission

75. *The draft decision was adopted.*

76. **Mr. Bagwell** (United States of America), expressing appreciation for all who had engaged constructively in negotiating a draft decision acceptable to all, said that he wished to clarify his delegation's position. Encouraging innovation required a system that fully protected intellectual property rights; advocated technology transfer only when voluntary and on mutually agreed terms; and embraced policies that afforded equal treatment and did not negatively affect economic interests. His delegation did not support the references to technology transfer, continued to oppose language that undermined intellectual property rights and was deeply concerned about language pertaining to trade, investment and intellectual property. Any effort in the United Nations to speak to ongoing or future WTO work, to reinterpret existing WTO rules and agreements or to undermine the independent mandate of WTO was unacceptable and irrelevant.

(h) International cooperation in tax matters (*continued*) (E/2018/45/Add.1)

77. **The President** said that she took it that the Council wished to take note of the report of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters on its sixteenth session (E/2018/45/Add.1).

78. *It was so decided.*

Action on the recommendations contained in the report of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters on its sixteenth session

79. **The President** invited the Council to take action on the draft decision contained in chapter IV of report of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters on its sixteenth session (E/2018/45/Add.1).

Draft decision: Venue and dates of and provisional agenda for the seventeenth session of the Committee

80. *The draft decision was adopted.*

(i) Geospatial information (*continued*) (E/2018/L.25)

Draft decision E/2018/L.25: Rules of procedure of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and draft agenda for its first session

81. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

82. *Draft decision E/2018/L.25 was adopted.*

Agenda item 12: Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(a) Reports of the coordination bodies (*continued*) (A/73/16 and E/2018/48)

83. **Mr. Varankov** (Belarus) said that his delegation attached great importance to the role of the Committee for Programme and Coordination in programme planning and evaluation, and in coordinating administrative and budgetary matters within the United Nations.

84. During the Committee's productive fifty-eighth session, the implementation of recommendations to improve the work of a number of important organizations within the United Nations system had been evaluated. Discussions had also been held on the programme performance of the United Nations and on the work of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

85. Among the positive outcomes of the session, Belarus particularly wished to note the contribution of the United Nations system towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the holistic approach to middle-income countries and the Secretariat's effective cooperation with States.

86. The Committee's role would continue to grow following the change to an annual budget in 2020. The next session of the Committee in 2019 would be key in determining its subsequent work in the context of the reform of the United Nations management system. It also provided a good opportunity to improve working methods. The Committee should therefore receive the necessary support in order to fully implement its mandate.

87. **The President** said that she took it that the Council wished to take note of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on its fifty-eighth session (A/73/16) and the annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2017 (E/2018/48).

88. *It was so decided.*

(g) Calendar of conferences and meetings in the economic, social and related fields (E/2018/L.21)

Draft resolution E/2018/L.21: Calendar of conferences and meetings in the economic, social and related fields

89. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

90. *Draft resolution E/2018/L.21 was adopted.*

Agenda item 4: Elections, nominations, confirmations and appointments (*continued*) (E/2018/9)

Committee for Development Policy (E/2018/9/Add.15)

91. **The President** invited the Council to turn its attention to the list of candidates contained in the note by the Secretary-General on the appointment of 24 members of the Committee for Development Policy (E/2018/9/Add.15). She took it that the Council approved their nomination by the Secretary-General for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2019 and ending on 31 December 2022.

92. *It was so decided.*

Commission on Science and Technology for Development

93. **The President** invited the Council to take action on the outstanding vacancies on the Commission on Science and Technology for Development. She had been informed that Oman had been endorsed by the Asia-Pacific States, and Turkey by the Western European and other States, both for a four-year term beginning on 1 January 2019 and ending on 31 December 2022. She took it that the Council wished to elect the candidates by acclamation.

94. *Oman and Turkey were elected members of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development by acclamation.*

95. **The President** said that, in the absence of any other candidates for election to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, she took it that the Council wished to postpone the election of one member from the African States and three members from the Latin American and Caribbean States for a four-year term beginning on 1 January 2019 and ending on 31 December 2022.

96. *It was so decided.*

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
(E/2018/9/Add.16)

97. **The President** said that the nomination of Ms. Karla Vanessa Lemus de Vásquez had been endorsed by the Latin America and Caribbean States for a four-year term beginning on 1 January 2019 and ending on 31 December 2022. She took it that the Council wished to elect the candidate by acclamation.

98. *Ms. Lemus de Vásquez (El Salvador) was elected to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights by acclamation.*

99. **The President** said that, in the absence of any other candidates for election to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, she took it that the Council wished to postpone the election of one member from the Asia-Pacific States for a four-year term beginning on 1 January 2019 and ending on 31 December 2022.

100. *It was so decided.*

Committee for the United Nations Population Award
(E/2018/9/Add.12)

101. **The President** said that Liberia had been endorsed by the African States for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2019 and ending on 31 December 2021. She took it that the Council wished to elect the candidate by acclamation.

102. *Liberia was elected to the Committee for the United Nations Population Award by acclamation.*

103. **The President** said that, in the absence of any other candidates for election to the Committee for the United Nations Population Award, she took it that the Council wished to postpone the election of two members from the African States, three members from the Asia-Pacific States, one member from the Eastern European States, two members from the Latin American and Caribbean States and one member from the Western European and other States for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2019 and ending on 31 December 2021.

104. *It was so decided.*

Conclusion of the 2018 session of the Council

105. **The President** declared that the Council had concluded its fourth coordination and management meeting and its 2018 session.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.